Approved For Release 2005/07/25 : CIA-RDP70-00211R000700310009-0

PREVENT NONESSENTIAL COPIES

Copies are costly. They add to the volume of records the Organization must handle, store, and dispose of. They slow down typing operations. Often typing and proofreading time is doubled when that "one extra copy" makes two typings necessary. Put a price tag on each copy. Route a single copy to several offices if time and circumstances permit. State your copy needs specifically. Limit courtesy copies to essentials. Count your copies; make your copies count.

USE SUBSTITUTES

Is typed correspondence always necessary? If not, dash off a note by hand on an office memorandum form or on a transmittal slip.

Does every reply, concurrence, or approval call for a separate piece of correspondence?

UNNECESSARY DICTATING

UNNECESSARY REVIEWING

Form letters (and memorandums) are appropriate if the message:

1. Is recurring routine business or information.
2. Is not personal or will not bring grief or disappointment to the reader.
3. Has 5, 10, 15, or 20 lines and is used more than 30, 20, 15, or 10 times per month, respectively.

Pattern letters (composed of selected pattern or sample paragraphs) are appropriate in lieu of form correspondence when the appearance of an individually typed letter or memorandum is called for.

Provide for these initially when setting up the format of your paper.

How about transmittal correspondence? Is it always necessary? Perhaps a handwritten routing sheet or transmittal slip will do. Or better still, consider revising the format of the material to provide spaces for "To," "From," and "Signature" and eliminate the transmittal correspondence entirely.

Does every instruction or decision have to be in writing? Consider handling more of your routine business by phone or personal contact if appropriate.

Does every letter or memorandum have to be drafted or dictated? Consider using form letters (or memorandums) and pattern correspondence whenever possible. They eliminate:

UNNECESSARY TYPING

UNNECESSARY FILING

When to use form and pattern correspondence as well as other cost-cutting techniques can be determined simply and inexpensively from an analysis of sample correspondence. Two sources are generally available—reading files, or extra copies collected during a sampling period. Also, at headquarters your Records Officer or a member of the Records Management Staff is available to help you. From such a survey and the tips in this article you can achieve astonishing results in:

Better correspondence prepared by speedier, simpler, and more economical means.

Less correspondence to manage, store, and dispose.

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AUTOMATIC TYPING

Electric typewriters automatically operated by a perforated paper tape are being used to save a substantial number of typing and proofreading hours, especially in the preparation of textual materials which require editing and the revision of several drafts before the final text is typed.

Briefly, these typewriters capture, in the form of holes in a paper tape, the data being typed. The perforated tape thus produced can then be inserted in the same typewriter and it automatically operates the typewriter to produce, at 120 words a minute, an exact duplicate of the original.

During the automatic typing operation the machine may be stopped to type manually changes or additional data. Information included in the original text but not wanted in subsequent retyping may be deleted.

The operational steps in the preparation of a report subject to editing by several different individuals, before the final text is agreed upon, might be as follows:

1. Simultaneously as the first draft of a report is typed, the typed data is captured in a tape.
2. The typed draft is proofread. Any resultant changes are made in both the draft and its tape.
3. The draft is distributed for concurrence. The tape is retained by the typist.
4. When edited copy of the first draft is returned, the changes found in all edited drafts are manually transferred to the original copy.
5. The corrected original is given to the typist who inserts the tape, produced from typing the first draft, in the reading unit of the machine. The machine then starts automatically to type the first draft. As additions, deletions, and other changes occur in the edited draft, the typist stops the automatic typing and manually types the changed material. As the automatic and manual typing is performed the machine captures both the automatically and manually typed data in a tape; thus, an updated tape for the second draft is produced at the rate of 120 words per minute.
6. Upon completion of the above operation, the manually typed data is proofread. (The automatically typed data *does not* require proofreading.)
7. The second draft is then distributed for concurrence. Its tape is retained by the typist and the old tape is destroyed.
8. All of the above steps are repeated for each successive draft. When the final draft is received, its tape is inserted in the reading unit of the machine and the finished report is automatically typed and does not required proofreading (except for the inconsequential number of changes that may have been made in the final draft).

It is important to note that with each additional draft made the amount of manual typing and proofreading *decreases* while the amount of automatic typing *increases*. As a result, final reports are produced at a high rate of speed without error.

RETIREMENT BILL SIGNED BY PRESIDENT

President Eisenhower has signed a new retirement bill which will benefit several thousand widows and widowers of deceased Federal employees.

It will let them pay back into the Civil Service Retirement Fund all or part of any contributions the deceased spouse may have withdrawn from the Civil Service Retirement Fund.

In this way, they can build up their survivorship annuities to the level they would have attained had there been no withdrawals from the Fund.

Federal employees who leave the service are permitted to withdraw their contributions. If they return, they ordinarily attempt to repay.

The new retirement bill was signed the day before the President signed the independent offices appropriation with its rider prohibiting retirement increases unless Congress first votes the necessary funds. That means the new retirement bill will not be affected by the rider.

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MANAGEMENT TOOLS

CUTTING CORRESPONDENCE COSTS

The written word is expensive. Drafted or dictated correspondence costs from $1.50 to $2.00 per page. A glance at your files (and some simple multiplication) will confirm that this cost is a major one to the Organization.

But you can cut correspondence costs by careful planning to:

Avoid retyping and rewriting.
Write to express, not impress.
Prevent the creation of nonessential copies.
Use less expensive substitutes for costlier dictated or drafted correspondence.

AVOID RETYPING AND REWRITING

Follow Organization format standards and correspondence handling procedures. They were adopted after study of many tested systems and consideration of Organizationwide preferences and needs. They were established to provide the uniformity essential to efficient correspondence operations. Individual preferences for special formats and procedures lead to confusion over "what is standard" and contribute greatly to the amount of retyping required.

Limit retyping and rewriting to instances in which you can truthfully say "yes" to one of these questions:

1. Will the present version fail to bring the required results?
2. Will the paper create a deservedly bad impression of your Office or of the Organization?
3. Is the nature of the correspondence such that it must be reworked until absolutely no further improvement appears possible?
4. Would you, from the viewpoint of a taxpayer, say that the paper should be reworked?

The fact that much retyping and rewriting could well be eliminated does not imply that our standards should be lowered. It does suggest, however, that a piece of correspondence should be judged for adequacy on the basis of common sense rather than on trivialities, or personal preferences. There is a point where further improvements fail to justify spending more time in rewriting or retyping.

WRITE TO EXPRESS, NOT IMPRESS

Apply the "Four S Formula" to your writing: Shortness, Simplicity, Sincerity, and Strength. Concise, clear writing has a far-reaching effect. Less time is needed to prepare, read, and understand it. Misinterpretations are avoided; good relations are maintained. We can't all be literary masters. We can strive, however, to rid our writing of the more common barriers to effective communication. Here is a partial check list to guide you. Each "no" answer indicates a potential area for improvement.

1. Are most of your letters or memorandums less than a page long?
2. Is your average sentence less than 22 words?
3. Do you keep paragraphs short—less than 10 lines?
4. Do you know some good techniques for beginning your correspondence naturally and conversationally?
5. Do you paraphrase items that do not call for a verbatim quotation?
6. Do you use personal pronouns freely, particularly "you"?
7. Do you know when the six little verb thieves, *make, take, give, hold, have,* and *be* rob your writing of its strength, as in *made the decision* rather than *decided?*
8. Do you prefer active verbs (*the official read the letter*) to passive ones (*the letter was read by the official*)?
9. Do you overwork prepositional phrases such as *for the purpose of* (for), *with reference to* (about, concerning), and many others?
10. Do you answer a question before explaining the answer?

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Selection Boards, in considering promotions, will be instructed to give credit for recorded evidence, including test scores, which reflects an improvement in an officer's language proficiency. Similarly, evidence of lack of concern or success in this field will reflect discredit.

In the cases of officers assigned to a post where a world language (e.g., French, German, Spanish, etc.) is spoken, failure to improve proficiency in the language of the post will constitute a deficiency in the officer's performance.

The Testing Unit of the School of Languages will be responsible for certifying that testing requirements have been fulfilled. Officers must obtain this certification and present it at the Transportation Branch before travel tickets will be released.

LANGUAGE TAPES AVAILABLE FOR TESTING BASIC AURAL COMPREHENSION

At the request of an Operating Division, the Assessment and Evaluation Staff of the Office of Training has recently developed a test to determine an individual's ability to comprehend simple verbal instructions in a given language. Results have indicated that the test will be a useful device for the selection of individuals whose language comprehension is sufficiently good to permit them to receive training. This test does not measure reading or writing skills, but is designed for use in specific situations involving ability to comprehend spoken languages. It has no relationship to the Organization's language aptitude and proficiency tests which are administered at headquarters for staff employees, and it should not be confused with those tests.

The test is given by means of a tape recording. It takes about 30 minutes to complete and score, and does not require the administrator to know the language in question. The test consists of a booklet containing 75 sets of pictures, four pictures to a set. The subject must identify the picture in each set referred to by the voice speaking on the tape. The same test booklets are used for a variety of languages as the pictures are of activities generally applicable to many cultural areas.

Tests are now available in English, German, Russian, Latvian, Estonian, and Ukrainian. A&E can make tapes available in a variety of languages. Requests for these tests should state the language needed and the tape speed wanted. The only requirements on the user are that, where possible, the individual who is to administer the tests be briefed by a member of the A&E Staff, and that the results of the tests be sent to A&E so that research in this field can continue.

OUT-PLACEMENT PROGRAM

The Out-Placement Program was established last February to provide guidance and assistance to Organization employees who have either become surplus to our program needs or who for personal reasons feel that a long tenure with the Organization would not be beneficial to either themselves or the Organization. The primary administrative objective behind the Out-Placement Program is to assist well-deserving employees to make an orderly transition from our service to other fields of employment.

Types of services furnished by the Out-Placement Branch are: (1) external employment guidance in terms of current job opportunities in Federal, state, and local governmental units; international organizations; universities; and private industry; (2) assistance in developing job resumés and appropriate employment data consistent with Organization employment status; (3) arranging for internal security and cover clearances, as required; and (4) arranging for specific external employment referrals and interviews.

Although the current labor market is, and has been, fairly tight, a number of successful out-placements have been made by this activity, largely through the efforts of the Out-Placement Branch in diagnosing transferrable skills of Organization employees and matching them with jobs in the same or related fields.

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